

A

VINDICATION  
OF THE  
OBSERVATOR

FROM SOME  
Scandalous Imputations

Lately laid to his Charge.

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By a True Son of the Church of *England*.

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L O N D O N,  
Printed for *George Downes*. 1685.

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# VINDICATION

## OF THE

# Observer, &c.

**P**ERHAPS I may be thought impertinent in attempting to defend a Person, who hath already clear'd himself so well, that all who are less prejudiced than his Enemies, must be satisfied of his innocence: For since good and convincing Reasons have not prevailed, it may seem foolish in me to expect success. I dare not indeed pretend to give more irrefragable answers, than the *Obs.* himself hath given to those Scandals thrown upon him. But I know with what evil eyes his Papers are perus'd, otherwise he had never wanted a vindication. I am not as yet notorious, my name will neither advantage nor prejudice my Pamphlet, so that I may hope to meet with none but unbiass'd Readers, and then I promise stronger arguments for the *Observer's* Integrity and Reputation, than his adversaries have brought for his disgrace or Hypocrisie. After so many slanders and calumnies cast on the *Observer*, and all proved shams and lies, one would think his Enemies should grow weary of spreading, and people more cautious of believing, any injurious reports of him: but we see neither of them; else upon such slender grounds, as the distorted sense of a single proposition is had never been bruited about Town, that the *Observer* held, All Subjects are bound in



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ed; till men were all of one opinion. The Apostle speaks expressly, *Let all things be done decently and in order.* Order then and decency must be observed; Inferiors are not judges of it, but Superiors are, and they only vested with a power of imposing it. If then the Sovereign is commanded by God to inspect, and regulate our outward behavior in the Church, doth he not sin against his Conscience, if he shall licence what he thinks, judges, and believes to be confusion and rudeness? Doth he faithfully discharge his Duty if he permits the Discipline Ecclesiastick to be trampled under foot? Governors and Ministers ridicul'd and discouraged; and every melancholy, turbulent, conceited ideot to burlesque the publick Offices of Divine Worship, by his Antick performance of them? Nor the *Observer* nor I touch any thing of perswasion, or opinion, or the private exercise of Religion, but of what is open and published, and of the external regiment of the Church, which is committed to the care of the Prince. As he is Supream in Ecclesiastick Affairs, his injunctions in the circumstances of Religion, ought to be complied with by the Subject, till 'tis as evident, that what is injoyn'd in particular, is flatly against a Precept of God, as 'tis certain that we are bound to obey the Supream Authority. Tenderness or coyness of conscience doth not discharge the obligation, either for the Prince to prescribe, or of the Subject to observe outward decency. Not of the Prince, for though he as a Christian ought charitably to pity all truly perplexed and doubting Consciences, while they contain themselves within the bounds of modesty and Duty; yet he must not break a Divine command in Charity to them; nor suffer the Service of God to be perform'd undecently, and disorderly in indulgence to scrupulous Consciences. Nor can niceness or fearfulness disengage the Subject from his tie to observe what Superiors appoint; For a gain saying conscience doth not infringe the Sovereigns Authority, nor render the matter of the Law unlawful; for could it do either, then one mans scruple would licence the disobedience of a whole Kingdom. Nor is Christian liberty at all violated by this; we are herein restrained already by Almighty God; who strictly requires obedience to Lawful Authority in every thing which doth not contradict his own commands. We have now seen the *Observer's* meaning; and it is no more than what hath been frequently urged by many eminent Divines of our Church, in  
defence

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defence of our Liturgie. I see no cause why the same thing should be Treason from Sir, R. L's. Pen, and Law from another mans. When the Sence, is the same, it cannot be poisoned by being well worded. Ay, but this is no Subject for a Layman to treat of. Men do but expose their toothless spite by such pitiful cavils. Is there any point or controversy in Divinity which Laymen (without the imputation of arrogance) have not handled? Reading or writing of any part of Theology, was never deemed in our Church the privilege of a Clergy Man. If I were disposed to alledge Testimonies for unquestionable matter of Fact, I could bring an hundred instances of Secular Men, who have gain'd credit, and Honor, by their discourses of both Polemick and Practical Divinity. And who is it that exclaims against the late shallow Pamphlets on this very subject, because they were wrote by Lay Authors? But 'tis strange to hear this objection from the mouths of those men, who make no distinction between Laity, and Clergy. Love can't hide more faults, than malice can create. Some have forc'd the same invidious sence on another passage of the same *Observer*. [*What answer shall that Prince make at the day of judgement, that when his conscience charges him (as he hopes for Salvation,) to provide, according to the best of his skill, for the welfare of his People, shall yet suffer his Subjects to exercise that licence, which he in his conscience thinks, judges, and believes will be for their destruction.*] My self have heard in a Coffee-House nothing less than Whips, and Scorpions, Fire and F. with a great deal more noise, than Reason or Charity, squeez'd from this single Sentence: which I mentioned not with the other two, because I think it hath a quite different meaning: and is only an argument against Toleration, drawn from the sad ruin and desolation, it might bring on our Country. The most Factious Zelor cannot deny, but a Prince is bound in conscience to secure, with the likeliest means he can choose, the Prosperity and Peace of his Dominions. (which is in effect the *Observer's* meaning) now what guide hath the Prince to follow herein, but prudence? and what is the surest, if not only guide of prudence, but experience? And experience hath taught us, that Wars and Rebellion, Oppression and Tyranny of Demagogues, are the consequents (else some would not so strongly desire it) of Liberty of Conscience. Doth not then conscience, as well as interest oblige crown'd heads to suppress



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press such divisions, as more than threaten the destruction of their own Prerogatives, and their Peoples welfare? Kings may, as far as they think fit, indulge harmless errors, and make what allowances they please for truly tender consciences: But which of the several Sects among us can give any marks of *such*? Are there not many whose principles and designs are destructive of all Civil Power, and Ecclesiastick Discipline? Did we ever see any of them scrupulous of disobeying their Sovereign? a true note of a soft conscience. What do they drive at by pleading for this liberty, but to be able to laugh at Church-censures *cum privilegio*, to over-aw and then overpower the established Government?

Now should a Prince see his Kingdom embroyled, his People harass'd with Civil Wars, his own Power so manacled, that he could not support his Subjects in their Right and Possessions, what a mighty comfort to him would it be, to reflect, these mischiefs were all usher'd in under the pretext of Religion? it would be a cordial satisfaction to think, he might have prevented all these villanies, but he was unwilling to curb tender Consciences. Now the *Observer* must be a great Villain in declaring 'tis his judgment, that God Almighty will be displeas'd at that Prince, who shall not endeavor to restrain his People from cutting one anothers Throats; that the same causes will probably produce the same effects; that those men who once tore up the foundations of the Government, ought not to be trusted as Friends to it, till they lay aside their old Principles and practices.

Well but he hath committed one unpardonable crime, that no true Protestant can pass by: he said the two Churches might easily be united!

Supposing he had affirmed (as some abuse him) an accommodation between the two Churches was feasible. Is one good natur'd error sufficient to sink a mans reputation? Will Christianity allow me to vilifie or reproach a man for one mistake in judgement? But where did he ever make the difference so small? What did he ever say, or at least intend, but that a Protestant and Papist might live amicably in the same Kingdom? That a man might be a true Son of the Church of *England*, without bellowing and shaking his head alwayes at the sight of a Romanist? After Sir R. L's long and constant adherence to his Prince and Mother Church, his daily  
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proofs and profession of his uprightness and sincerity, charity will not allow any man to entertain less honourable thoughts of him, for these impertinent Scandals his Enemies invent against him. Nor, without the imputation of folly or injustice, can I, or any honest man before we have undeniable proof to the contrary, think him otherwise than a firm Protestant, and a Loyal Subject.

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**FINIS.**